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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [EUN](#) [XH](#) [ZB](#) [ZK](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: INFORMAL POLITICAL DIRECTORS' MEETING -
EU/NATO RELATIONS, REGIONAL CHALLENGES

REF: A. STATE 173318
[1](#)B. LOGSDON/UKRAINE DESK 8/30/06 E-MAIL
[1](#)C. KIEV 10

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Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In what the Ukrainian MFA would like to see morph into a regular informal gathering, political directors from select EU countries and countries of the "Baltic-Black-Caspian seas" region, along with EUR A/S Fried, discussed Ukraine's relationship with the EU and NATO and exchanged views on regional issues. When Ukraine's representative complained that the EU's European Neighborhood Policy put Ukraine into a "sandwich" zone between the EU and NATO, on one side, and Russia on the other, A/S Fried urged Ukraine to utilize fully all the opportunities available to it. On regional issues, he pushed back against Ukrainian worries that Kosovo independence would be exploited as a precedent for other conflicts. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: The November 16 meeting, the first of its kind, was well received and, partly due to A/S Fried's early acceptance, well attended. The meeting reinforced Ukraine's interest in playing a regional leadership role. What exactly prompted DFM Andriy Veselovsky to convene this political directors' (POLDIR) meeting, however, and its underlying rationale are unclear, but the initiative has several possible antecedents. First, the agenda and active discussion during the October 4-5 Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (E-PINE) gathering in Kyiv (ref A) could have inspired Veselovsky to hold a similar meeting with participants expanded beyond Baltic and Nordic participants and under Ukrainian auspices. Second, as one Kyiv-based diplomat noted, the gathering had much the same participants as the Ukraine-sponsored "Community of Democratic Choice" summit (ref C), except for the Balkan countries. (In response to A/S Fried's suggestion, however, Veselovsky promised to consider Balkan countries' inclusion at the next session. Veselovsky also suggested Belarus might be invited in the future.) Third, the session on frozen conflicts was not inconsistent with the proposal that Ambassador at Large for Conflict Settlement Oleksiy Rybak floated (ref B) for a permanent "forum for unofficial contacts and consultations concerning global challenges." End summary/comment.

Format and Purpose

[1](#)3. (U) Veselovsky welcomed participants, saying the Ukrainian MFA had invited directors of the political departments of Foreign Ministries of "Baltic-Black-Caspian seas" region, the EU, U.S., and Russia in the hope of holding an informal

"brainstorming" session on matters of mutual concern. (Later, Veselovsky said Armenia had pulled out at the last minute and Russia had refused to send anyone other than a locally assigned diplomatic observer.) The discussion would be under Chatham House rules and focus on EU and NATO relations with its neighbors and developing mutual approaches to issues affecting regional developments such as enhancing democracy, rule of law, and human rights; transnational threats; and frozen conflicts.

14. (U) Veselovsky said the Ukrainian MFA hoped to hold such meetings twice yearly, either as a host or with another country hosting. Lithuania Undersecretary Zygimantas Pavilionis later offered also to host and suggested the gathering be dubbed a "Friends of Ukraine" meeting along the lines of similar groups in support of countries like Bulgaria, Moldova, and Georgia. Ukraine had invited representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Turkey, plus the European Union (Council, current, Finnish, and next, German, presidencies) and the U.S. Names of participating political directors are in para 10.

NATO/EU Relations - A Sandwich Region?

15. (SBU) Ukrainian MFA Acting Director for Political Affairs Oleksandr Tsvietkov led the discussion on "macro developments" and the process of European integration by noting that the EU "European Neighborhood Policy" (ENP) had led to creation of a set of second-class countries that did not have definite prospects for EU membership sandwiched between the EU and NATO, on the west, and Russia, in the east. He said his comments were based on two key phrases: "partners are not the same as allies" and "dialogue is not the same as multinational planning and exercises." Ukraine

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looked forward to establishing a free trade area with the EU after entering the World Trade Organization (WTO). Ukraine also hoped to develop a "new European type of association" in the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) or "PCA plus" that would be govern Ukraine-EU relations over the next ten to fifteen years.

16. (C) EU members rebutted Tsvietkov's complaint that Ukraine had been relegated to a "sandwich" zone. Head of the European Commission Delegation to Ukraine Ian Boag, while acknowledging that the EU had suspended admission of new members, argued that the ENP allowed integration of countries short of actual membership. Emphasis on the unattainable was injurious to the Ukraine-EU relationship. Representatives of Germany, Finland, Slovakia, and Lithuania stressed the importance of Ukraine to the region. German Special Envoy Hans-Dieter Lucas affirmed that Germany would emphasize the "eastern dimension" during its EU presidency (starting in January 2007), while Finnish Director General Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve noted that an emphasis on the eastern dimension had been natural for Finland while holding the current EU presidency. Noting the U.S. takes no view on EU membership issues, A/S Fried recalled the NATO expansion process in the early 1990s, when countries had complained that the NATO Partnership-for-Peace (PfP) program had been a substitute for actual membership; in fact, PfP had been an avenue to eventual NATO membership. Countries like Ukraine should take advantage of all the opportunities presented to them.

Regional Flashpoints

17. (C) In the second half of the meeting, Tsvietkov explained the relevance to Ukraine of the "micro-developments" on the agenda: the south Caucasus, Belarus, Transnistria, Balkans/Kosovo, and the Black Sea region. Developments in

these areas could have a direct impact on Ukraine. He proposed that a special international conference be held on ways to settle regional conflicts, including in the south Caucasus. Tsvietkov argued the precedent of Kosovo's independence could damage existing rules applying to other conflicts in the region. On Belarus, Tsvietkov urged support for greater people-to-people contacts. Veselovsky said the Black Sea should follow the precedent of the Baltic Sea in not becoming an arena for regional rivalries.

¶8. (C) The Azerbaijan, Georgian, and Moldovan representatives focused their comments on the conflicts on or near their territory: Nagorno-Karabakh for Azerbaijan, South Ossetia and Abkhazia for Georgia, and Transnistria for Moldova. Georgian Policy Planning Director Temur Keeklidze and others stressed the importance of promoting economic development and economic linkages to conflict areas. A/S Fried said, with respect to Kosovo, there was no choice of best options and Belgrade had tacitly recognized Kosovo's future status when it had excluded Kosovo Albanians from the recently concluded constitutional referendum. Since Chatham House rules applied, Fried provided the latest USG perspective on Kosovo. He also stressed that the international community should not allow some countries, by insistent repetition, to make the claim that Kosovo was a precedent for any other conflict.

¶9. (U) A/S Fried did not have the opportunity clear this cable.

Participants -----

¶10. (U) Following is the list of respective Foreign Ministries attendees besides European Commission delegation head Ian Boag and the Ukrainian hosts. Names of Kyiv-based diplomats have been omitted.

Azerbaijan

- Mr. Tofiq Musayev, Foreign Policy Planning and Strategic Studies Department
- Mr. Galib Israfilov, Security Affairs Department Division Director

Bulgaria

- Mrs. Maya Dobрева, Europe III Directorate European States Department Director
- Mrs. Nina Simova, Foreign Policy Planning and Coordination Directorate State Expert

Czech Republic

- Mrs. Hana Hubackova, First Territorial Section Director General

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Estonia

- Mr. Aivo Orav, Political Department Director General

Finland

- Ms. Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve, Political Department Director General

Georgia

- Mr. Temur Kekelidze, Political Department Policy Planning Division Director

Germany

- Mr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Special Envoy for Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Caucasus

Hungary

- Mr. Zsolt Pataki, EU Foreign and Security Policy Department Director
- Mr. Istvan Ijgyarto, EU Affairs 2nds EU Department Ambassador

Latvia

- Mr. Juris Poikans, Deputy Political Director

Lithuania

- Mr. Zygimantas Pavilionis, Undersecretary
- Mrs. Vita Naujokaitite, Foreign and Security Policy
Division Attache

Moldova

- Mr. Eugen Vizir, Analysis and Planning Division Director

Poland

- Mr. Wojciech Zajaczkowski, Eastern Policy Department
Director

Romania

- Mr. Shtefan Tinca, Directorate General for Political
Affairs Deputy Director General
- Mrs. Magdalena Florescu Ciobataru, Directorate General for
Political Affairs 3rd Secretary

Slovakia

- Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Political Affairs Director General

Turkey

- Mr. Selim Kuneralp, Policy Planning Director General

11. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:

www.state.gov.gov/p/eur/kyiv.

Taylor